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Viewing cable 06TOKYO2987, CO-CHAIRS APPEAL TO SRI LANKA TO PULL BACK FROM

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06TOKYO2987	2006-05-31 09:19	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Tokyo

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.aftenposten.no/spesial/wikileaksdokumenter/article3955959.ece>

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OO RUEHWEB

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 002987
SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2011

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [NO](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: CO-CHAIRS APPEAL TO SRI LANKA TO PULL BACK FROM
CRISIS

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for Reasons 1.4 b/d

¶1. (C) Summary: U.S., Japanese, Norwegian and EU participants at the 30 May 2006 Tokyo Co-Chairs meeting concluded a joint statement presenting a strong Co-Chairs position on the failing Sri Lankan peace process. Participants agreed to cite Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) failure to prevent attacks by armed militias, and to urge both the GSL and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to re-commit to agreed basic peace principles. The statement noted the international community's ability to "support" but not "deliver" peace, and called strongly on the GSL and LTTE to guarantee the safety of NGOs and aid workers in Sri Lanka. They endorsed a set of Norwegian initiatives, to be issued several days after the meeting, for specific actions the parties should take to negotiate a settlement of the conflict. The Co-Chairs elected not to respond to the GSL's statement on the EU designation of the LTTE as a terrorist organization. Full text of the Joint Statement is in paragraph 5, below. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During the May 30 Tokyo Co-Chairs meeting on the Sri Lanka peace process, U.S., Japanese, Norwegian and EU participants presented their views and agreed that Sri Lanka was on the brink of a civil war. They also agreed the international community should make clear that both sides would be held accountable for upholding the 2002 cease-fire accord. In order to prepare for future talks, the international community should propose concrete steps to prepare both parties to return to the negotiating table.

¶3. (C) The Co-Chairs decided to explore the concept of allocating tasks to other groups of countries who wish to support the Co-Chairs' efforts. Participants agreed that delivering the peace was the task of Sri Lankans themselves, and that the international community can only support the effort. They endorsed a Norwegian initiative listing specific steps to immediately end violence, restore normalcy, and resume political talks for the parties to take to move towards a negotiated settlement of the conflict, and agreed that details of the initiative would be issued several days after the meeting. The delegations noted the necessity of examining how to strengthen the role of SLMM. Participants also conveyed that the Co-Chairs' "condemn absolutely" attacks on NGOs and aid workers and called on the GSL and the LTTE to ensure the protection of civil society organizations' operations in Sri Lanka.

GSL Statement on EU Designation of LTTE

¶4. (C) Mid-meeting, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosts delivered a statement from Sri Lankan President Rajapaksa responding to the EU's designation of LTTE as a terrorist organization, on which the GSL hoped for a Co-Chair response. Meeting participants widely agreed that the GSL's text, which preceded the EU's designation announcement, contained weak and imprecise language on the GSL's implementation of past peace commitments, and that the Co-Chairs statement should not address it.

Joint Statement

¶5. (U) At the conclusion of the meeting, participants adopted the following joint statement.

Begin text

The Tokyo Co-Chairs appeal to Sri Lanka to pull back from crisis.

Co-Chairs met today in Tokyo at a time when Sri Lanka is on the brink of war.

Japan convened this meeting, three years after the original Tokyo Conference on Reconstruction and Development of Sri

Lanka, to decide whether the Co-Chairs, namely the European Union, Japan, US and Norway, can usefully help further in addressing Sri Lanka's crisis when the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE do not seem to be able to prevent the sliding back into violence. The Co-Chairs call on both parties to take immediate steps to reverse the deteriorating situation and put the country back on the road to peace. The LTTE must re-enter the negotiating process. It must renounce terrorism and violence. It must show that it is willing to make the political compromises needed for a political solution within a united Sri Lanka. This solution should include democratic rights of all peoples of Sri Lanka. The international community will respond favorably to such actions; failure to do so will lead to deeper isolation of the LTTE. The Government must show that it will address the legitimate grievances of the Tamils. It must immediately prevent groups based in its territory from carrying out violence and acts of terrorism. It must protect the rights and security of Tamils throughout the country and ensure violators are prosecuted. It must show that it is ready to make the dramatic political changes to bring about a new system of governance which will enhance the rights of all Sri Lankans, including the Muslims. The international community will support such steps; failure to take such steps will diminish international support.

The Co-Chairs recognize that both parties have responsibilities which they have failed to deliver upon, including the commitments made at their meeting in Geneva in February 2006. The LTTE is responsible for numerous terrorist attacks. The Government has failed to prevent attacks of armed groups, including Karuna and violent elements of EPDP. The violence that has resulted is no longer confined to the parties to the conflict but has spilled over to ruin or end the lives of innocent civilians. This has led to a breakdown of law and order and the terrorization of the affected population. Abuses of human rights have been assessed recently by the UN and others. The Co-Chairs call on all parties to respect human rights and pursue human rights abuses. This situation is not sustainable and the country will continue its slide into greater conflict unless the two protagonists cease all violence and resolve their differences through peaceful negotiation.

While the situation gives cause for grave concern, the Co-Chairs concluded that the ingredients for a peaceful settlement remain present. The majority in Sri Lanka still seek peace. All Co-Chairs renewed their commitment to do all possible to help Sri Lanka in a manner that promotes peace and to support the current Norwegian-facilitated peace effort. Other countries and organizations share this view and wish to support the Co-Chairs' effort. To this end, the Co-Chairs will explore interest for allocating tasks to other groups of countries to improve the efficiency of work within the areas defined by the participants in the Tokyo Conference three years ago.

The Tamil and Muslim peoples of Sri Lanka have justified and substantial grievances that have not yet been adequately addressed. The Co-Chairs encourage the Government of the Sri Lanka to further develop concrete policies for addressing the grievances of minorities and for building mutual confidence between different communities. The Co-Chairs and the international community will support the Government's efforts towards implementing such policies.

However, three years of work since the original Tokyo Conference shows the international community can only support but cannot deliver peace. Peace can only be delivered by Sri Lankans themselves. The Co-Chairs' role can be meaningful only where those parties want to help themselves in bringing peace with commitment and honesty.

Both parties have agreed to the basic principles of any future peace during the successful period of negotiation in

2002-2003. The parties should recommit to these principles set down in the Ceasefire Agreement, the decisions from the six rounds of talks, and the meeting in Geneva in February 2006. In this context, the Co-Chairs will support any solution agreed by the parties that safeguards the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, assures protection and fulfills the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil people and indeed of the Muslim people, guarantees democracy and human rights, and is acceptable to all communities. Norway has prepared a number of initiatives for the parties to return to talks, which will be issued shortly. The Co-Chairs endorsed these initiatives.

The solutions to the problem cannot be brought through conflict - the history of Sri Lanka shows that war is not winnable for either side and simply causes immense suffering to the citizens. Finding solutions requires political commitment, imagination and spirit of compromise and the responsibility for this lies solely with the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

The Co-Chairs reiterate their support for the important role of Norway as facilitator to the peace process and the ceasefire monitoring activities of Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) in an increasingly difficult situation. At the same time, it is necessary to examine how to strengthen the role of SLMM.

The Co-chairs note that over \$3,400 million has been provided by donors based on Tokyo pledges and tsunami funds, and more than 20% of that assistance has been allocated to the North and East including LTTE controlled area. Such assistance has contributed to improving the livelihood of people in Sri Lanka. As long as the commitment to the Ceasefire Agreement by both parties is proven by way of their actions, the international community will continue its assistance in addition to humanitarian aid. As improvement of health, education and development is important as confidence-building measures, the Co-Chairs could also provide funding to support the efforts to meet these critical needs.

The Co-Chairs reaffirm that a continuous and positive involvement of the UN, Red Cross, and civil society, including the NGOs, in the peace process is vital. However, there has been increasing criticism of and even open attacks against these actors lately. The Co-Chairs condemn absolutely these attacks. The Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE should ensure their protection so their positive work for Sri Lanka can continue. The Co-Chairs will follow up closely the findings of the agencies involved in monitoring human rights, such as the UN and SLMM.

Three years ago at the original Tokyo Conference, the international community was requested to support the peace process. The key elements to this process were the facilitation by Norway, the monitoring role of the SLMM, the Co-Chairs and substantial aid flows from a multitude of donors. The international community remains committed to its supporting role agreed three years ago but it turns to the government and LTTE to deliver on their side of the bargain if war is to be avoided.

End text.

Participants

16. (U) Participants at the Co-Chairs meeting included the following:

United States

Mr. Richard Boucher, U.S. Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs
Ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead, U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives
Ms. Molly Gower, Sri Lanka Desk Officer

Japan

Ambassador Yasushi Akashi, Representative of the Government
of Japan
Ambassador Akio Suda, Japan's Ambassador to Sri Lanka
Mr. Shinsuke Shimizu, Director of Southwest Asia Division,
MOFA

Norway

Mr. Erik Solheim, Norwegian Minister of International
Development
Mr. Jon Hanssen-Bauer, Norwegian Special Envoy
Ambassador Hans Brattskar, Norway's Ambassador to Sri Lanka

European Union

Mr. Herve Jouanjean, European Community's Representative
Mr. Julian Wilson, Head of Delegation, European Union
Delegation to Sri Lanka
Ambassador Peter Moser, Austrian Ambassador to Japan
Ambassador Van Dijk Reynout, Ambassador of the Netherlands to
Sri Lanka
[17](#). (U) A/S Boucher cleared this message.
SCHIEFFER